

State and federal disaster officials are reminding Rhode Island residents who suffered damages from the storms and flooding between March 12 and April 12 that they have one month left to apply for disaster assistance.

The deadline for FEMA disaster assistance registration and to return U.S. Small Business Administration loan applications is May 28.

"We don't want anyone with disaster damages to miss this opportunity for assistance," said Federal Coordinating Officer Gracia Szczech. "Individual disaster assistance may include grants to help pay for home repair, temporary housing, some uninsurable items or disaster-related unemployment."

The SBA encourages residents to return their completed applications, even if they have not settled with their insurance company. Waiting to file an SBA application could cause unnecessary delays in receiving disaster assistance.

If you received an SBA application, complete it and send it in, even if you don't intend to take out a loan. Denial of an application may open the door to further federal assistance, such as help in replacing uninsured personal property. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY 1-800-977-8339).

Residents and business owners can call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585 to register. Lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Anyone interested in registering online can do so at www.fema.gov <<http://www.fema.gov>>. After the May 28 disaster assistance deadline, FEMA's toll-free lines will still be available to answer questions about programs or the status of an application.

Registering with FEMA starts the application process for federal and state assistance. People who have registered with other agencies must also register with FEMA if they want access to federal and state aid.

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders and to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private, nonprofit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding

efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call (800) 659-2955 (TTY 1-800-977-8339).

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.